

IN HONORED GLORY

An Oration

by
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Could also be used as a dramatic monolog.

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The author wrote this commentary after returning from a trip with his students. He has approached the subject through the eyes of his students. The author is a veteran of World War II, where he was seriously wounded in the Battle of the Bulge.

The three days our class had spent in Washington, DC, had sped by all too fast. But the sites, fellowship and the knowledge we had experienced had, on that last day, caught up with us. We were, understandably, tired--perhaps a little blasé.

As we met in the motel lobby on the last day in town, the big question was, "Where are we going today?" Answered with one word: "Arlington."

Someone groaned, "Arlington? A cemetery? A graveyard?"

"Yea, but then we head home. Right from there."

And so we mounted our big bus and headed through Washington's streets, past monuments and historical sites, across the river to once again view the Lincoln Memorial, and up the hill to the gates of "that graveyard."

Slowly, our bus maneuvered through seemingly unending rows of small, granite markers, up a slight rise and quietly into a parking space. Dismounting, we were led up a walkway, little was being said among us. We were going home soon, so we could endure one more stop at one more site.

And then, reaching the crest of a slight incline there was revealed a large, rather plain monument. As we approached I was able to discern the wording carved into the marble block:

"HERE RESTS, IN HONORED GLORY, AN AMERICAN SOLDIER KNOWN BUT TO GOD."

We had been led to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers. As if by order, we ceased any bit of conversation. Even footsteps seemed to be muffled. And at that moment I felt that I was alone. My classmates could have been miles away. I was communicating with no one.

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